The first EURAXESS Links global event, held on 15 November at the Regent Hotel, Beijing-China was a huge success. The event brought together around 150 participants, stakeholders, Europeans currently seconded to China or working under Chinese contracts, Chinese researchers living in Europe and international researchers interested in further collaboration with European institutions, both public and private.

Dr Markus Edener, Ambassador of the EU to the People’s Republic China and Mongolia opened the event, followed by a video message from EC Commissioner, Mrs Máire Geoghegan-Quinn highlighting the political importance of international collaboration in linking researchers worldwide and underlining the services provided by EURAXESS to improve researcher’s mobility. Following the opening ceremony, the programme of the day was articulated around 2 main sessions: “Linking Europe and China” introduced the important relations and collaboration between Europe and China; “Linking Europe and the World” discussed the researchers and employers perspective in both academia and industry. They debated the different aspects of the career development and mobility experiences within a researcher’s career. Top class speakers from both Europe and China provided useful insights to the audience. Workshops in the afternoon provided the opportunity to deepen discussions and opportunities for networking and exchange. A highlight of the event was the opening of jobs on the EURAXESS Links websites, thus widening the opportunities for European researchers abroad.

I want to build on that, so that all research jobs in Europe are published on EURAXESS by the end of 2014.

Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn
KEY MESSAGES FROM THE EVENT

- Europe is a key partner for China in science, technology and innovation: Europe’s tradition and excellence in science as well as its education system attract many scholars and research collaborations between both sides. For the years to come, more targeted co-operation with China, as equal partner will be sought based on experience gained to date in this longstanding relationship.

- Europe provides excellent job and funding opportunities for career development and the unique services provided by EURAXESS cater for researchers’ needs at all stage of their career (from job or funding search to personalised assistance to smoothly settle in a European country).

- EURAXESS Links is the overseas dimension to keep European researchers always linked to their native continent and show the attractiveness of Europe as research destination to non-European researchers.

- EURAXESS Links is part of a global network with Europe at its centre, facilitating mobility of researchers to and from Europe, but also from one third-country to another while maintaining a constant link with Europe.

“\nWe cannot tackle complex and global challenges such as climate change, energy security and an ageing population without making it easier for the best researchers coming from different social and cultural environments from Europe and around the world to work together.”

Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn

- European researchers in China are an asset for European companies doing business in China

- European researchers would like to see Chinese contracts become more attractive.
Linking China and Europe

The aim of the session was to showcase **COLLABORATION** between China and Europe:

- Stimulating networking among European researchers and European industries in China to highlight career opportunities for them in China as well as in their European home base;
- Promoting EURAXESS Links by stimulating networking among the researcher’s communities of both the public and private sector;
- Valorising the careers of European researchers with a research experience abroad, thus including China;

In general it can be stated that there are more areas of convergence than divergence between the EU and China and we need to bring these messages to the respective audiences.

An increasing number of European companies entered the Chinese domestic market, establish R&D, engage in cooperative development, take advantage of an increasingly skilled work force, establish suppliers and develop long-term partnerships in China.

Europe is a key partner for China in science, technology and innovation: Europe’s tradition and excellence in science as well as its education system attract many scholars and research collaborations between both sides. For the years to come, more targeted co-operation with China, as equal partner will be sought based on experience gained to date in this longstanding relationship.

A vast majority of Member States have signed have signed a bilateral S&T agreement with the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) that frames the relationship. Joint Committees take place on a regular basis to define priorities, usually every two years. But many research activities are also carried out on a more decentralised way, simply between companies.

Joint institutes / laboratories are an important feature of EU-China S&T co-operation at EU MS level.

There are a range of mechanisms for co-operation: joint projects being the most common.

EURAXESS Links is a valuable tool for European researchers to network and to stay in contact.
Linking Europe and the world

The aim of the session was to highlight **MOBILITY, JOBS AND NEW SKILLS** for researchers to respond also to the needs of **INDUSTRY**:

- To accelerate the shift to a knowledge economy that supports and creates growth, science and industry should be matched up. To this end new skills responding better to the needs of industry should become part of all research programmes and training;
- Mobility within the research career is encouraged: The EC has set up a pan-European job platform, EURAXESS Jobs, aimed at matching up research job search and job offer as well a Europe-wide assistance network for researchers and their families.

**EURAXESS for RESEARCHERS**

- Europe is an attractive and open place for researchers and innovators
- Europe provides excellent job and funding opportunities for a career development and the unique services provided by EURAXESS cater for researchers' needs at all stage of their career (from job or funding search to personalised assistance to smoothly settle in a European country).
- The overseas dimension of EURAXESS is Links: to keep European researchers always linked to their native continent and show the attractiveness of Europe as research destination to non-European researchers
- EURAXESS Links is part of a global network with Europe at its centre, facilitating mobility of researchers to and from Europe, but also from one third-country to another while maintaining a constant link with Europe.

**EURAXESS for EMPLOYERS**

- The European Union wants to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.
- Europe is an attractive and open place for researchers and innovators
- There is a need to promote science, research and innovation as engine of growth in Europe, and the need to put science at the heart of Europe and Europe at the heart of science.
- Globalized systems: we need global research funding to foster brain circulation
- EURAXESS-Researchers in Motion is an ERA key initiative addressed also to researcher employers and funders. By supporting them before and during the recruitment phase through personalised services, it aims at facilitating the match between job offer and job search - including all related issues - thus showing that Europe is an attractive place offering several opportunities to carry out research activity.
This workshop dealt with the personal issues that surround mobility. There was a diverse group with Chinese researchers working currently in Europe and European researchers working in China.

Why do EU researchers move to China and vice versa?
- Academic interest, research work, contacts.
- Curiosity of being exposed to a new environment and culture.

It was agreed that mobility in research is driven by the above two factors in all contexts worldwide. The panel argued that due to the recent economic boom in China, there is a strong improvement in building bridges for academic exchange between China and the EU over the past ten years.

What are the barriers of the academic exchange between EU and China?
- Language barriers
- Entry conditions.
- Differences in research methodology (the way research is conducted) and resources (labs, equipment, etc).
- Difference in academic structures (lack of harmonisation of academic titles, fellowships, post-docs, degrees, etc).
- Difference in communication, teamwork, etc.
- Cultural difference, social integration, food, climate/weather.

The audience also argued that there are differences between the social and physical sciences. Dr. Evans pointed out that “it is the nature of the mobility that makes the researcher to focus on the differences between the country of origin and the new environment. However, if you focus on the differences only you will have a difficult life”. This means that the researcher should have the emotional resilience and adaptive capacity to perceive the new local conditions (language barrier, new culture) as an opportunity so that to avoid being trapped into a negative feedback loop and a “culture of blame”. However, the panel agreed that feeling lonely and frustrated is normal as some cultural differences cannot be overcome, thus recognising, appreciating, and accepting them is the only way forward.

What is the best way to help people that experience these extreme academic exchanges?
- Bottom up approaches are key (e.g. EURAXESS, ThinkINChina, etc)
- EURAXESS portal should include databases of “successful cases or talents”; i.e., the contact details (email, field of research, affiliation) of researchers and academics who have moved to China (or any other environment) so that to share their experiences with potential applicants.

It was agreed that the EURAXESS portal is a key tool to make the entry of Chinese researchers to Europe appealing.

Speakers:
- Ms. Maria-Christina GEORGIADOU, University of Cambridge - rapporteur
- Dr. Enrico FARDELLA, Peking University
- Ms. Viktoria BODNAROVA, EURAXESS Czech Republic
- Dr. David EVANS, Beijing University of Chemical Technology
- Dr. Ming CAO, ERC Grantee
The main outcome of the workshop was: **Manage your mobility!**

Mobility is not automatically a gain it comes down how the individual manages the mobility to produce a net gain out of it. There is many aspects of this statement we discussed the following during the workshop.

- Mobility always come with a cost associated as one hast to give up an existing network at home to move somewhere. Therefore It is important to try to stay connected with the home network in order to reduce this loss

- One not only has to be mobile but has to also market the mobility in a CV or career path to profit from it.

- Different sectors e.g. Academia and industry valorize mobility experiences in the different country one visited differently. For example a stay in an emerging country can be highly beneficial for a job in industry, while it might not be honored for an academic position.

- Mobility offers great opportunities but they have to be valorized

- Timing is key to success: The best locations and the timing will depend on the career path you have or will choose.

- There is a difference on how much mobility is appreciated in a career path between different European countries. This is especially true for the academic sector.

- There exists a large difference in the amount of mobility moving from academia to industry and return, between Europe (one way street) and China (strong exchange)

The Prime motivations for mobility in the audience were:

- Research opportunity
- Better training
- Curiosity

A quick vote within the audience showed that nearly everyone would be mobile again and is not regretting her/his move to China.
The first outcome of the workshop was to establish clear definitions of the different types of networks that are available for researchers to use.

- Physical networks such as those created by attending conferences and workshops in person
- Virtual networks such as those provided by social media tools including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- Global networks such as the one currently being created by the ‘Voice of the Researchers’ in Europe and also ‘ThinkIN’ in China

Physical networks can come in two distinct forms, namely:

- Interdisciplinary networks, which enhance the research process by offering opportunities to exchange ideas with peers from different disciplines, but also prevent from becoming isolated – something that is particularly important in the Arts and Humanities where research is often conducted by an individual independent from any research group or laboratory setting.
- Subject-specific networks, which have the added advantage of uniting people through an instant common interest, they have the potential to build bridges across cultures and nationalities.

Two key features are needed: The frequency and the repetition of events.

Conclusions were:

The individual – Researchers have to be proactive in searching out networks themselves. This requires effort but also an element of luck and opportunity because one never knows who or what one will stumble across in the process.

Embassies and Member States – Embassies and host countries have a responsibility to organise small-scale events to facilitate networking.

Research managers and group leaders can promote networking opportunities by knowing their teams well and by building links with teams elsewhere. This can be done via workshops and small congresses, and also by organising dinners, lunches and other informal meetings.

Academic networks were not the only type of network important to researchers. Equally important were domestic networks or family networks. Domestic networks can:

Help researchers to learn how to cope with and manage the transition to a new country and to a different environment.

Help with practical issues outside of research, such as providing specialist local knowledge on how to obtain health insurance, for example, or information on how a particular pension or tax system works. Provide support for spouses and children (to ensure, for example, that a spouse does not become stuck at home and that children can be sent to the most appropriate school and attend relevant clubs and societies). Domestic networks are provided for by industry but not in academia. Such networks are urgently needed in addition to the services already provided for by the likes of EURAXESS.

Speakers:
- Dr. Diana Beech - University of Cambridge
- Dr. Manuel Perez Garcia - Tsinghua University
- Dr. Babak Javid - Tsinghua University
- Dr. Thijs Kouwenhoven - Peking University
- Ms. Cecilia Cabello, EURAXESS Spain
- Dr. Yiya Chen, ERC Grantee
EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion

EURAXESS is a pan-European ERA initiative providing access to a complete range of information and support services for European and non-European researchers wishing to pursue research careers in Europe. EURAXESS offers access to the job market; assists researchers in advancing their careers in another European country and supports scientific organisations in their search for outstanding research talent. EURAXESS is a truly pan-European initiative, supported by 40 participating countries across Europe. Through its portal it provides a single access point to information across all countries and personalised assistance by the more than 520 staff working in the 200 Services Centres.

EURAXESS is a key ERA initiative in supporting the European Union’s commitment to removing the barriers to free movement of knowledge within Europe, to strengthening cross-border mobility of researchers, students, scientists and academic staff, and to providing researchers with better careers structures. EURAXESS is the operational arm of policy implementation.

**EURAXESS Jobs:** constantly updated free of charge information on job vacancies and funding opportunities as well as CVs from researchers from around the world.

**EURAXESS Services:** a direct link to the over 500 staff in 200 EURAXESS Services Centres who provide free assistance to researchers and their families in the planning and organisation of their move to, or stay in, a foreign country. Questions treated mainly relate to visa applications, social security and finding accommodation, Kindergarten or school, as well as language courses, health care in a new country.

**EURAXESS Rights:** information regarding the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, which aim at setting out rules and obligations of researchers and their employers, as well as transparent and fair recruitment procedures through the Human Resources Strategy.

**EURAXESS Links:** a networking tool for European researchers in China, Japan, USA, ASEAN and India, Brazil and Canada will be opened in 2013.

The EURAXESS team, from left to right: Stefaan HERMANS, Anna KARAOGLOU, Jacques de SOYRES and Kitty FEHRINGER